

CLAIMS

1. Process for the manufacture of ice cups using a machine for the manufacture of ice of the type comprising a condensation plate capable of receiving water spray for the formation of ice elements, comprising the stages of:

- a) directing a flow of water spray towards the condensation plate and cooling the condensation plate,
- b) cooling the condensation plate for a predetermined period of time such as to cause freezing of the water and the consequent formation of ice elements,
- c) interrupting the cooling of the condensation plate,
- d) heating the condensation plate for an interval of time of predetermined duration so as to permit detachment of the ice elements,

characterised in that the following stages are inserted in combination with each other between stage c) and stage d):

- e) heating the condensation plate through one or more heating stages of increasing duration,
- f) cooling the condensation plate through one or more cooling stages of decreasing duration.

2. Process according to Claim 1, characterised in that the heating stages of increasing duration alternate with subsequent cooling stages of decreasing duration.

3. Process according to Claim 2, characterised in that an intermediate waiting stage of predetermined length is inserted between the interruption of cooling and the first stage in which the condensation plate is heated.

4. Process according to Claim 3, characterised in that the intermediate waiting stage has a duration of approximately 10-15 seconds.

5. Process according to Claim 2, characterised in that each heating stage of increasing duration and the subsequent cooling stage of decreasing duration has overall a length of approximately 30 seconds.

6. Process according to Claim 1, characterised in that the flow of water spray directed towards the condensation plate is maintained until the ice elements detach.

7. Process according to Claim 1, characterised in that once the ice elements have detached the machine for the manufacture of ice is switched off for a predetermined interval of time.

8. Process according to Claim 1, characterised in that during stage a) the condensation plate is cooled to a temperature of approximately  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ .